

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 005951

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APPROVED BY: S/CCT: ROBERT A FEAREY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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FOL REPEAT OF STATE 005951 TO KHARTOUM INFO ADDIS ABABA ASMARA
ROME LONDON JIDDA CAIRO BEIRUT FRANKFURT USCINCEUR JAN 09

QTE:

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E.O. 11652:NA

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF KAGNEW II

REF: KHARTOUM 0079

1. IN VIEW OF FACT THAT STORY OF RELEASE ALREADY KNOWN
TO SOME REPORTERS HERE, PERHAPS THROUGH FAMILY MEMBERS,
DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICER READ FOLLOWING STATEMENT AT
NOON PRESS BRIEFING:

QUOTE: I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT TWO AMERICAN
SERVICEMEN WHO WERE KIDNAPPED IN ETHIOPIA ON SEPTEMBER 12
LAST YEAR WERE RELEASED THIS MORNING AND ARE NOW AT OUR
EMBASSY IN KHARTOUM, SUDAN. THE TWO MEN ARE REPORTED BY
AMBASSADOR BREWER TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION.

THERE ARE STILL THREE AMERICAN NAVY CONTRACT EM-
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PAGE 02 STATE 005951

PLOYEES BEING HELD IN ETHIOPIA. TWO, MR. STEVEN C.

CAMPBELL AND MR. JAMES J. HARRELL, WERE ABDUCTED IN JULY BY A SECOND ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE GROUP, THE POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES. THE THIRD, MR. RONALD MICHALKE, WAS KIDNAPPED IN LATE DECEMBER BY THUS FAR UNIDENTIFIED ABDUCTORS. WE HOPE THAT THE RELEASE OF MESSRS. STRICKLAND AND BOWIDOWICZ WILL ENHANCE PROSPECTS OF PROMPT RELEASE

OF THE OTHER AMERICAN CAPTIVES. UNQUOTE

2. SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOLLOW:

QUOTE: QUESTION: ARE THESE MEN ENLISTED MEN IN THE NAVY?

ANSWER: LET ME JUST CHECK. I DO NOT HAVE THE IDENTIFICATION OF THEM. YOU WILL HAVE TO GET THAT FROM THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT. (ADDED LATER: THOMAS BOWIDOWICZ IS AN ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN THIRD CLASS. DAVID STRICKLAND IS A SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS, U.S. ARMY.)

QUESTION: ALSO, DO YOU HAVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND LOCATION OF THEIR RELEASE?

ANSWER: BECAUSE WE STILL HAVE OTHER PEOPLE DETAINED, I REALLY CANNOT GO INTO THE DETAILS OF THEIR RELEASE. I HAVE JUST SAID THEY ARE IN KHARTOUM, SUDAN.

QUESTION: WELL, I NOTICE YOU SAY: "THERE ARE STILL THREE AMERICAN NAVY CONTRACT EMPLOYEES BEING HELD IN ETHIOPIA." IS IT NOT POSSIBLE THAT THEY'RE BEING HELD IN SUDAN?

ANSWER: THAT IS THE INFORMATION I WAS PROVIDED.

QUESTION: WERE THEY RELEASED TO THE SUDAN? WERE THEY DELIVERED TO THE SUDAN?

ANSWER: I JUST CANNOT DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF HOW THEY GOT TO KHARTOUM.

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PAGE 03 STATE 005951

QUESTION: DO YOU KNOW IF THE THREE OTHER EMPLOYEES ARE STILL ALIVE?

ANSWER: AS FAR AS WE KNOW, YES.

QUESTION: DID YOU TAKE ANY SPECIFIC STEPS TO OBTAIN THEIR RELEASE?

ANSWER: I WOULD JUST POINT OUT THAT WE HAD EMPHASIZED TO THE ELF FROM THE OUTSET THAT IT COULD ACHIEVE NOTHING THROUGH THE KIDNAPPING OF THESE INNOCENT MEN AND NO RANSOM WAS PAID NOR DID WE MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS OF ANY KIND TO THE KIDNAPPERS.

QUESTION: WELL, WAS ANY RANSOM DEMANDED?

ANSWER: I AM NOT SURE OF THE DEMANDS OF THE GROUP.

QUESTION: DID THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT HELP OUT IN GETTING THE MEN BACK?

ANSWER: IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF THE THREE AMERICANS IN ETHIOPIA, I PREFER OR I AM NOT REALLY ABLE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION. UNQUOTE KISSINGER UNQTE KISSINGER

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